

Thursday, 26 October 2006

Dear Mrs. Dilley:

For more than a century, my wife's Edmiston ancestors lived in Virginia and West Virginia.

Matthew Edmiston – born 1715, Donegal, Ireland; died 1796, Jennings Creek, Augusta, VA

James Edmiston – 1746, Tinkling Springs, Augusta, VA; 1817; died 1817, Bath, VA

Andrew Edmiston – born 1777, Botetourt, VA; died 1864 Hillsboro, Pocahontas, WV

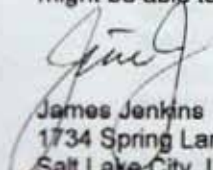
Lieutenant James Edmiston – born 1809, Mill Point, Pocahontas VA; died 1871, Towanda, Butler, KS

Mathew Shanklin Edmiston – born 1855, Little Levels, Pocahontas, WV; died 1898, White Pine, CO

We have collected some stories and census information about this family. I have enclosed a note I wrote last year on the Edmistons. The middle part addresses the time they spent in West Virginia.

We plan a visit to West Virginia and particularly to Pocahontas County in May 2007. We would like research help that might enrich this trip and guidance during at least part of the time we are there.

What would you suggest in our case? Do you know anyone who might be able to help us?


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Robert the Bruce (1274-1329)

The man known today as Robert the Bruce was Robert I, King of Scotland. He was one of Scotland's greatest kings, reigning from 1306 to 1329. He is our 18th great grandfather.



Robert the Bruce was born into a prominent Scottish family. He was the grandson of Robert de Brus, "The Old Competitor," who was an unsuccessful claimant to the throne, losing to John Balliol, a man whose weakness the Bruce family despised. Both Robert the Bruce and his father had sided with Edward I, king of England, against John Balliol. While John was in exile, there were consistent rumors that he would return with a French army to regain the Scottish throne. It was through his father's bold actions that Robert the Bruce was able to move toward the Scottish throne.

Robert's mother was by all accounts a formidable woman. She was Marjorie of Carrick, the daughter of Niall of Carrick and Margaret, who in turn was the daughter of Walter Stewart, the 3rd High Stewart of Scotland. According to legend, she kept Robert Bruce's father captive until he agreed to marriage.

Robert the Bruce inherited from his mother the Earldom of Carrick, a district in southwestern Scotland. At the age of 18, he assumed the position of earl, and was thus responsible for running a county-sized feudal estate. Since Scotland was under English control at the time, Robert was obligated to pledge loyalty to the English king, Edward I, that he despised. Despite this promise, Robert gradually became engaged in a struggle for Scottish independence. For example, in March 1302, he sent a letter to the monks at Melrose Abbey which effectively weakened his usefulness to the English king. In it he apologized for calling monks to his army, and he pledged that, henceforth, he would "never again" require the monks to serve unless it was to "the common army of the whole realm", thus for national defense. Through such actions, he gradually gained the support of a growing number of Scottish nationalists.



The Castle at Carrick

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that even though they had been forced to surrender to the English they would devote their future efforts toward Scottish interests and their ultimate freedom. Then they promised that if either of them were to break the pact they would owe the other ten-thousand pounds, a huge sum at the time. That same year, Robert's father died and Robert the Bruce became lord of Annandale in Scotland and of all the Bruce lands in England. He was 30 years old at the time and was suddenly very wealthy. In addition, he had natural claim to the throne of Scotland by right of his ancestry.

In 1306, there were two barriers to Robert's becoming king: first, the occupation of the English, and second, a man named John Comyn. Like Robert, John was a powerful noble with royal ancestry. John's open opposition of the English gave him a better reputation with his countrymen. In an arranged meeting in a church, Robert physically attacked John before the high altar of the Greyfriars monastery and then fled. Upon hearing that John still survived, Robert returned to the church and finished him off. For his violation of the church's sanctity, Robert was excommunicated. Now Robert realized that the die had been cast. He had to become either king or fugitive. Thus he asserted his claim to the Scottish crown and was crowned King of Scots. Though now king, he did not yet have a kingdom, and because he held the title, King of Scotland, his life was in direct danger. Upon hearing the news, the English immediately attacked and Robert's forces were defeated. His wife and sister were captured. Three of his younger brothers were executed. He survived, escaped and fled to the west, taking ultimate refuge on the island of Rathlin, off the coast of Ireland. All the Bruce estates were confiscated. His followers were punished severely. Legend has it that during this time of discouragement, Robert the Bruce, while hiding in a cave, learned courage and hope from watching a spider persevere in spinning its web.

The next year, in 1307, Robert returned to Scotland and won a victory at Loudon Hill. His public support grew. In response, Edward I led an army to subdue once again the Scottish rebels. But he, now quite old, died on the way. His feeble son, Edward II, lacked the strength or will to continue the Scottish campaign. Thus the tide turned in Robert's favor. Robert the Bruce was able to consolidate his position in Scotland and to begin recapturing lands and castles once lost to the English. Because of the weakness of their initial position, his was at first mostly a guerrilla war. Despite his continuing excommunication, the Church recognized him as king.

In 1314, Robert besieged the English position at Stirling, the capitol of Scotland. Edward II led a large relief force but Robert intercepted and defeated it overwhelmingly. The war with England continued. In 1318, the Scots recaptured an important area in southeastern Scotland from the English. In 1320, Robert and 38 lords signed The Declaration of Arbroath, which said in part: "It is in truth, not for glory, nor riches, nor honors that we are fighting, bur for freedom." A treaty signed in 1323 lasted only four years, broken by the young new king, Edward III, who led an unsuccessful invasion of Scotland. After about 18 years of resistance, in 1328, the English signed the Treaty of Northampton thereby formally recognizing the independence of Scotland and the validity of Robert's title to the throne. Pope John XXII lifted Robert's excommunication, recognizing Scotland as an independent nation, and Robert as its king.



The Castle at Stirling

Robert spent the next and last year of his life in his castle. He died at the age of 55; dying, it is thought by some, from some awful disease, like leprosy or syphilis, described then as an "unclean ailment." He requested that his heart be buried in Jerusalem. The person taking it there was killed in Spain, and his heart probably never made it to its intended destination.

Robert the Bruce left his sole surviving infant son, David II, to succeed him. But David II soon died. Responsibility for leadership then turned to his daughter, Margorie Bruce, who had married Walter Stewart, 6th High Steward of Scotland. But when Marjorie delivered her son, Robert, she was lying on the side of a road after falling off a horse. She died in childbirth. Her husband, Walter Stewart, ruled as King of Scotland. (This was the beginning of the House of Stewart.) He was succeeded by his son, Robert II Stewart.

A great granddaughter of Robert the Bruce became through marriage an Edmiston. Because of this marriage, the Edmistons became part of the royal House of Stuart.

William de Edmonstoun
b. Abt 1025, Flanders
d. Abt 1080, Scotland

Sir William de Edmonstoun
b.
d.

Henricus de Edmonstoun
b.
d.

Sir John Edmonstoun
b.
d.

Henricus de Edmonstoun II
b.
d.

Robert I, Robert the Bruce
b. 11 July 1274 Turnberry Castle, Scotland
d. 1329
Isabella de Mar
b. 1277, Scotland
d. 1296, Scotland

Walter the Stewart
b. 1293, Scotland
d. 1326, Scotland
Marjorie the Bruce
b. December 1296 Scotland
d. 2 March 1316, Scotland

King Robert II
b. 2 March 1316 Scotland
d. 19 April 1390 Scotland
Elizabeth Mure of Rowallan
b. Abt. 1318 Scotland
d. Abt. 1356 Scotland

Sir John Edmonstoun
b. 1275
d.

Sir John Edmonstoun II
b. 1350, Scotland
d.
Princess Isobel Stewart
b. Abt 1364 Scotland
d.

The House of Stuart. The House of Stuart, of which Kings Robert I and II were a part, ruled Scotland for continually 336 years, from 1371 to 1707.

In England, after the death of Elizabeth I, the last monarch from the House of Tudor, the House of Stuart ruled over the thrones of three countries - Scotland, England and Ireland - from 1603 to 1707.



The Crown of Scotland

Current-day Scotland

The drama that is Scotland continues. In 1999, Scotland regained a large measure of political self government. The process is called devolution – a transfer of power from England back to Scotland. Scotland now has its own parliament, known as the Holyrood.



Holyrood
The New Scottish Parliament Building

Some feared that this move would trigger a immediate and complete separation between the two countries. Nothing that dramatic has happened. In the place of histrionics, there has been slouching. Scotland has regressed into an inward-looking, slightly chip-on-shoulder, slightly Anglophobic country with no clear sense of direction. Instead of gaining a new self-confidence, it expresses self-doubt, while clinging to an old dependency on the state, which still means, at least in part, England. In summary, Scotland still lives a bit in its past. It is still part child.

The new Scottish legislature have been slow to tax, quick to spend, and even quicker to ban. Care for the elderly is free. Assistance with installation of central heating is provided. University tuition has been abolished. Hunting is now illegal. Such moves are easy and generally popular. But raising the funds to pay for them is not.

Due to its rules, rates of taxation and culture, Scotland lags Britain and Ireland in economic growth. Its mining and heavy industry are declining. Prosperity is distinctly lower in the western part of Scotland than in the east. For example, in the Calton district of Glasgow, male life expectancy is even 53.9 years, almost ten years less than it is in Bangladesh. Only 9% of the adults there are unemployed, but 58% do not work. In other words, the majority live off the state. Scotland remains a quite unfriendly place to do business. Yet Scotland resents its relative poverty.

Scotland is now a place where Scottish fans cheer during sporting events for the any opponent of the English; everyone complains when cricket matches are shown on television; Scottish children bully kids at school for being too "English"; and cinema audience roars with approval whenever William Wallace kills an Englishman during a frequent showing of "Braveheart".

In the arts, Scotland continues to flourish.

Scotland loves to play the victim. It tolerates, if not enables, abortion, homosexuality and sexual offenses. Scotland is still a bit angry. Centuries-old offenses against Scotland still offend. Its wonderful memory sometimes shows a dark side. Scotland is still rebellious, still a little bit tribal, not wholly rational, disciplined or responsible. One might get the impression that if Scotland were an individual, a visit or two with a therapist might be recommended.

Drawn from "Home Truths about Home Rule, The Economist, 18 May 2006

The Edmistons in Ireland
Sir William Edmonstone, Knight, 7th of Dunreath, 1st of RedHall
Ballycarry, Ireland (1618-1629)

Sir William Edmonstone married Isobel, the daughter of John Haldane of Gleneagles and had five sons and two daughters. In 1608 William moved his family to Antrim County, Ireland. The move was probably made for two reasons. The first may have been financial, caused by the reduction of the Duntreath Estate. This was due to giving away much of the property to younger branches of the family, which reduced the income to Duntreath. It's possible that religion may have been the major reason as both William and his father were supporters of Presbyterianism. (Scotland was mostly Catholic and Northern Ireland was becoming a Protestant refuge.)

During this time Ireland was rebelling against the English and much of the land in Northern Ireland had been forfeited. James VI (and I) at the time was in the process of "planting" Ireland with Protestants and members of the Presbyterian faith to reduce the Catholic influence. The Edmonstones were not a part of this plantation, but William leased land from a friend and "planter," John Dalway, who, by marrying into the family of O'Neil, had obtained a sizable grant of land from his father-in-law.

This property, called Broadisland (Braidenisland) in the parish of Templecorran, was comprised of about 2,870 acres in the County of Antrim. The property was leased to William "forever" on the condition that he find five able horsemen, properly equipped, to attend the yearly general hosting of the Lord Deputy for forty days and also agreed to build a defendable bawn (mansion) made of lime and stone, covered with slate at the cost of three hundred pounds. William shared this land with his brother-in-law, James Edmonstone, who had accompanied William to Ireland. He gave him the townland of Bentra.

Within a few years, William acquired more land along with the mansion house of Redhall, located in what is now Ballycarry. The mansion was in need of repairs and refurbishing, which took about five years to complete. An addition was completed at the same time. Once refurbished, the ceiling in both William's and his wife's bedrooms and a sitting room off the master suite displayed pictures of William and his wife done in plaster painted blue and white.

Redhall sits on the crest of a hill overlooking the sea to the east between Ireland and Scotland. The home remained in the family until it was sold in 1789 to R. G. Kerr and the Edmonstone family returned to Scotland.



Redhall, Ireland
 This is the home of Sir William Edmonstone, 7th of Dunreath.



The move to Ireland from Scotland required financial assistance for the purchase of property in Ireland. By 1614, James, who never went to Ireland, was in debt and was forced to mortgage Duntreath to his son-in-law, Sir William Graeme of Braco, to be redeemed on the payment of eighty thousand merks. However, that same year Graeme turned the mortgage over to Sir William Livingston of Kilsyth, but not on the same terms. Some portions of the estate were alienated forever.

Before he went to Ireland, William was appointed one of the Justices (or Commissioners) for repressing the Jesuits and seminary priests by an Act of the General Assembly on March 6, 1589. Like James Edmonstone, a staunch Presbyterian, William brought the Reverend Edward Bryce with him. Bryce had been forced to leave Scotland, due to his opposition to the introduction of Prelacy in 1613. William provided the land on which a new church was built, which became the first Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The remains of the church can still be seen in the cemetery at Ballycarry, where both William and his wife are buried. Later a church was built about a block from the old one and today it still houses the baptismal bowl and chalice with the Edmonstone crest, which were given to the church by William. Bryce remained as minister until 1639 when Charles I forced the Presbyterians underground when he proclaimed the Episcopal Church as the national religion of Ireland.

From Joan Wheeler La Grone, Edmonstone Chronicles, 2004, 147-150

The Edmiston in the United States

About 1725, Mathew immigrated from Ireland to the American colonies with his mother and older brother, James. They first went to Pennsylvania, but later ended up living in Augusta County, Virginia.

Andrew loved competitive sports, especially boxing and wrestling. He and his wife had eleven children. During their last years, they lived in the home of their son, George McNeel Edmiston, who seemed to be very wealthy.

When he as very young, Mathew moved with his family to Kansas, When he was about 20, he moved from Towanda to western Kansas. He married Eva, had two children, but divorced and left town. He died in Colorado when only 45 years old.

Mathew Edmiston
b. 1715, Donegal, Ireland
d. Jennings Creek, Augusta, VA
Margaret Peterson
b. Abt. 1727, Chester, PA
d. Bef. 1790, Augusta County, VA

James Edmiston
b. 1746, Tinkling Spring, Augusta, VA
d. 1817, Bath, VA
Jane Smith
b. 1746, Augusta County, VA
d. 1837, Pocahontas County, WV

Andrew Edmiston
b. 1777, Botetourt County, VA
d. 1864, Hillsboro, Pocahontas, WV
Mary Polly Gilliland
b. 1790, Greenbrier County, WV
d. 1877, Pocahontas County, WV

Lieutenant James Edmiston.
b. 1809, Mill Point, Pocahontas, WV
d. 1871, Towanda, Butler, KS
Mary Fry Hill
b. 1815, Bath County, VA
d. 1878, Towanda, Butler, KS

Mathew Shanklin Edmiston
b. 1855, Little Levels, Pocahontas, WV
d. 1898 White Pine, CO
Eva Cordelia Bowlus
b. 1862, Warren County, IN
d. 1937

Lester Harry Edmiston
b. 1882, Pierceville, Finney, KS
d. 1927, Long Beach, Los Angeles, CA
Leona Diantha Dawson
b. 1884, Mediden, Jefferson, LS
d. 1953, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Ca

Eugene Ellis Edmiston
b. 1912, Topeka, KS
d. 1958, Long Beach, CA
Gwendolyn Pearl Troutner
b. 1913, Hanford, CA
d. 1969, Taft, CA

Constance Jean Edmiston
b. 1940, Long Beach, Los Angeles, CA

In 1777, James served as a private in the Revolutionary War army. Within several months he was wounded and allowed to return home. Augusta County was split into many new counties. The region in which they lived became Pocahontas County.

James served as an officer in the U. S. Army possibly in the Mexican-American War. His family suffered significantly both during and after the conflict. When he was about 55 years old, he moved his family from what had become West Virginia to Kansas.

Lester married Leona in Topeka while he worked there for the railroad. When he was in his early 40s, he moved his family to California. He died when 45 years old in an industrial accident. Leona thereafter raised the kids and ultimately remarried.

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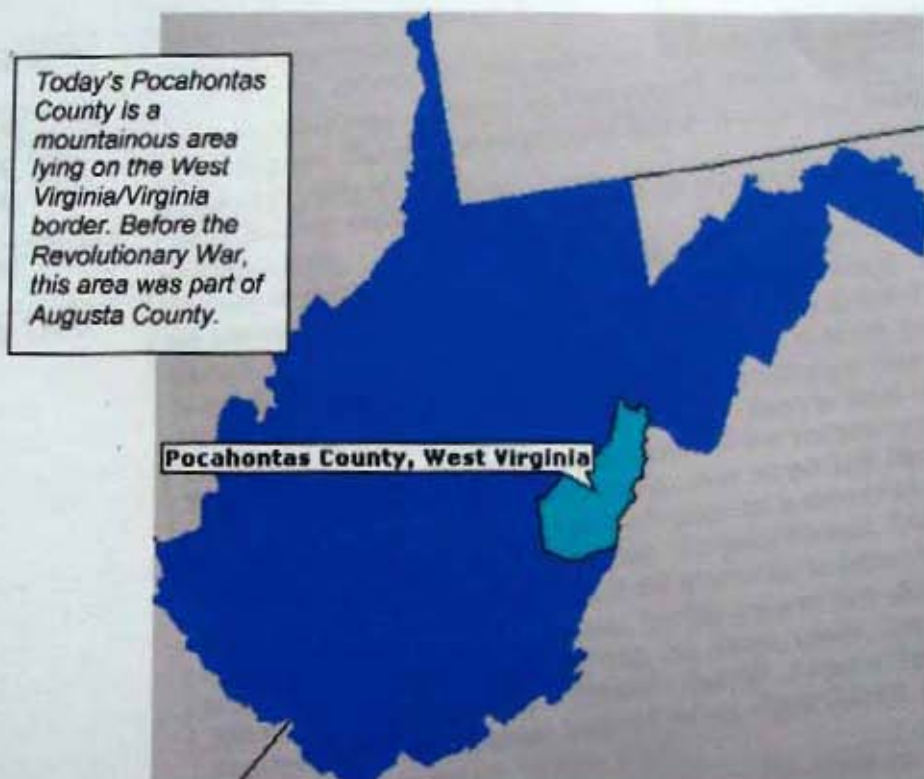
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Mathew Edmiston (1715-1796)
Margaret Patterson (1727-1790)

James Edmiston (1714-)
Widow Hayes

James Edmonstone (oldest son and heir of Sir James) immigrated to the American Colonies sometime between 1720 and 1730. He traveled with his mother, Jane Thompson Edmonstone, and his younger brother, Mathew, following the death of his father. They settled first in Chester County, PA, staying there until 1740 to 1742.

Upon moving to Augusta County, VA, they changed their name from Edmonstone to Edmiston. Prior to 1776, Augusta County was the largest county in Virginia covering most of what is today West Virginia, and extending northward into southwest Pennsylvania. This was the broad wilderness area of Virginia. The Pocahontas County, WV of today was at that time a part of the original Augusta County.



In about 1750, James Edmiston is thought to have married a Widow Hayes in Augusta County. There are no known children from this marriage.

In 1745, Mathew Edmiston married Margaret Paterson. Mathew was about 30 at the time and Margaret was about 18. Together they had at least three sons and three daughters.

The following events have been recorded in Augusta County, VA involving the Edmistons and their contemporaries, the McNeels.

10 Dec 1745

Mathew Edmondson, James Carter, and John Finla receive permission to open a road from Andrew Hamilton's in Calf Pasture through Jennings Gap to

	John Finla's.
11 Feb 1746	Mathew Edmiston witnessed the deed transferring land from Daniel McEnaire, gent. to Thomas Gardiner, sawyer.
2 Mar 1759	Mathew Edmiston posted a bond as serve as the guardian of Robina, daughter of James Patterson. Robina did not choose a guardian.
6 Apr 1749	The will of Robert Edmiston listed as beneficiaries: Jean Edmiston (possibly his wife); his daughter Dorothy Edmiston; and his two sons James and William. The executors of the will were Thomas McSpaden, William Edmiston. Witnesses John. Edmiston and Samuel Buchanan. The will was proved on 22 May 1750.
19 Aug 1752	Mathew Edmiston became qualified as a Cornet. (This was during the French-Indian War. A Cornet was the fifth rank officer in a troop of cavalry. As a cornet, it was his duty to carry the colors of the regiment.)
28 April 1756	Mathew Edmiston, as constable, made an oath before Patrick Martin that he had seized the goods belonging to John Young that had been taken by violent force from him by Robert Young and his wife, Agnes.
15 Mar 1757	Mathew Edmiston and Margaret paid to John Richey 32 Pounds for 76 acres on a draft of Jennings Branch. The witnesses were William Wallace and Samuel Colwell.
20 June 1764	Mathew Edmiston and Margaret paid to Samuel Patterson 55 Pounds for 238 acres in Borden's tract.
22 June 1764	Daniel McCoy, an orphan, was bound to John McNeill, gentleman.
23 Aug 1764	James Baldwin was identified as a servant of John McNeill.
24 Aug 1764	Sarah Bigham, Sarah Cartwright, and Sarah Walkly were identified as servants of John McNeill.
26 Mar. 1765	Daniel McCoy, orphan, the former ward of John McNeill, was bound to Andrew Lewis.
1 Feb 1765	The will of John McNeill, late Major in Virginia Regiment is recorded. In it, all his estate is to be sold and proceeds put in hands of friend, Mr. Andrew Sproul, of Gosport, merchant, for the sole use of my father if he should be living at the time of my death; if he is dead then it is to be given to my brother Hector McNeill, on condition that he gets his discharge from the Army within 12 months; If Hector refuses, then it is to be given to Aunt Henrietta McNeill. To Miss. Jenny McClenachan, her choice of the horses he bought from her brother when they came from Carolina; also an ancient family white stone ring, set in gold, which I hope she will wear as a memorial of the great esteem and affection I have long had for her. To good friends, Col. Andrew Lewis and George Weedon B to former, best set of pistols; to latter, his sword. He hopes the following will accept and wear, for the sake of him who has long esteemed them, a plain mourning golden ring, viz: Thos. Lewis, Jno. Madison, Gabriel Jones, my cousin Annabella McNeill, and Mr. Andrew Sproul. Executor: Col. Andrew Lewis. Witnesses: Gabriel Jones, Felix Gilbert, and Jno. Madison. The will was proved on 19 Mar 1765.
16 April 1776	There is a legal dispute between Matthew Edmiston vs. George Anderson, formerly of this county.
28 Jun 1790	The will of Mathew Edmiston, farmer, is recorded. He gives property to son James; son William; son David; grandson Mathew Kirk; daughter Mary Kirk; granddaughter Margaret Jones; grandson Mathew Edmonson Magill; daughter Ann Jones; daughter Jean Magill; The executors were his sons James and William Edmiston. The witnesses were David McNair, John Kirk, and Jean Kirk. The will was proved in Jan 1796.

John McNeel, Jr. (1745-1825)
Martha Davis (1743-1830)

John McNeel is our 5th great grandfather. His great granddaughter married Lieutenant James Edmiston.



John McNeel, the ancestor of the McNeel relationship in our county, appears to have been the first to occupy the Little Levels by permanent settlement. He was a native of Frederick County, Virginia, but passed much of his early life in or near Cumberland, Maryland. He seems to have been fond of athletics, and in a pugilistic contest his antagonist was so badly knocked out as to be regarded fatally injured. To avoid arrest and trial for murder, he fled. He followed the trend of the Alleghenies. A long while was spent in their gloomy solitudes, and his sufferings of mind and body can not be even imagined by any of us. Finally, going deeper and deeper into the wilderness, lie came at last in view of the Levels, about 1765.

As he overlooked this section from some neighboring eminence, he saw much to remind him of his native region. An extensive, wooded plain, bordered by mountain ranges of unsurpassed beauty, and very fertile. He decided, as every thing looked so much like the old home scenery, to settle here; and chose a site for his cabin near the present home occupied by Hon. M. J. McNeel. Traces of this cabin have been seen by many persons yet living, between the gate on the public road and his residence. If the spot could be identified, it would be well to mark it with a piece of the marble recently found in such fabulous quantities close by.

Here the solitary man brooded over his supposed guilt, prayed with his broken heart for pardon, and hunted for his food, subsisting almost entirely upon venison and trout. One day while hunting, he met Charles and Edward Kinnison, from his old home, who had come out here prospecting for a situation. He learned from them that the person lie boxed with was not dead, not even seriously hurt. This was indeed good news, and then and there lie felt free from all bloody stain, and he could return without fear of molestation.

John McNeel insisted upon his friends to share his cabin with him. He assisted them in making a selection for a home adjoining his tract. The three then set out on their return to the lower Valley of Virginia.

While on this visit home, John. McNeel married Martha Davis, who was born in Wales in 1740, and soon after their marriage they came out to the Levels. A few acres were soon cleared off, and plenty to subsist upon was raised.

Mr. McNeel seemed deeply impressed with a sense of gratitude to God for his providential care, after all his wanderings and fears to permit the lines to fall to him in such a pleasant, wealthy place, that he built a house for worship, the White Pole Church.

In a few years, the Dunmore War opened up. The three friends - McNeel and two Kinnisons - went into camp at Lewisburg, and joined the expedition to Point Pleasant, October 10, 1774. They survived that eventful and important contest, came back, but not to remain very long. They went across the eastern mountains and enlisted in some company that went from Frederick County, served during the Revolution, and then took up the peaceful tenor of their lives where they had left off. There is a pathetic tradition that while Mr. McNeel was absent to Point Pleasant a child was born and died before his return. The mother with her own hands prepared the coffin and the grave, and buried it. They reared five children, two sons and three daughters.

Dunmore's War. This conflict began when in the spring of 1774 several Indian tribes in the Ohio River Valley (Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky) resisted the intrusion into their territory of large parties of white settlers. One such group was led by Daniel Boone. Earlier in the Proclamation of 1763, the Indians had received the land between the Appalachians and the Mississippi. But the settlers saw the Proclamation as a betrayal of their interests. Settlers became terrified that they would be massacred. As tensions rose, groups of previously peaceful Indians were ambushed by the whites and slain. Indians now became filled with hatred and a sense of injustice. They banded together for attack. In May 1774, Virginia's governor, John Murray, Lord Dunmore, mustered forces. Eleven hundred men marched deep into the Ohio Valley. On October 10, the Indians attacked in the Battle of Point Pleasant. After a day of fierce fighting, the defeated Indians retreated. In effect, after this encounter hostilities

Taken from William T. Price, Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County, West Virginia, 1901, 135-137

According to a family history, The McNeel Family Record, by Betsy Jordan Edgar, 1967, Martha, the wife of John McNeel, Jr., brought a Welsh Bible with her when she got married. That book claims that this Bible is still in existence, with pages full of family information, but with only the entry for Martha's birth is legible in it. The volume shows pictures of the Bible, and states that it was in the possession of Mary Thrasher, daughter of Rev. J.C. and Eliza McNeel Thrasher.

James Edmiston (1746-1817)
Jane Smith (1746-1837)

James Edmiston participated as a soldier in the Revolutionary War.

Edmiston, James (1746-1817). Private Capt. Hays' Company, Col. George Matthews-Regiment. The rolls show he enlisted April, 1777, and was released in October because of wounds received during the months of July and August of that year. Records of the Adjutant-General, U.S. War Dept.

From Sons of the Revolution in the State of West Virginia, Document 14

James Edmiston lived at Droop Mountain near Hillsboro, Augusta County, VA. This area became Pocahontas County, WV after the Civil War.

**Andrew Edmiston (1777-1864)
Mary Polly Gilliland (1790-1877)**

Andrew is our 3rd great grandfather. Andrew and Mary were the parents of eleven children including James, our great great grandfather, and George McNeel Edmiston.

The first direct view of this family comes in 1850. Here we see that Andrew and Mary are 73 and 60 years old respectively. Their youngest daughter, Mary, who is 25 years old, still lives with them. (It seems that Mary never marries.) In addition, for some unknown reason, four of children of George McNeel Edmiston and his wife, Nancy Jordan Edmiston, live with them: Richard, Abraham, John and Lewis. They also have two servants.

1850 U. S. Federal Census

Town: 47th District; County: Pocahontas; State: VA

Andrew Edmiston; Age: 73; Male; Farmer; Place of Birth: VA

Mary Edmiston; Age: 60; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Mary Edmiston; Age: 25; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Richard Edmiston; Age: 7; Male; Place of Birth: VA

Abraham Edmiston; Age: 5; Male; Place of Birth: VA

John Edmiston; Age: 2; Male; Place of Birth: VA

Lewis Edmiston; Age: 1 Month; Place of Birth: VA

James Callison; Age: 21; Male; Laborer; Place of Birth: VA

Anne Brock; Age: 25; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Ten years later, Andrew and Mary have moved into the home of their son, George. Their daughter, Mary, is still with them. All of George and Nancy's children are still at home. It is interesting to note that this family seems to be very wealthy. The estimated value of their real estate, \$25,300, is worth about \$1.5 million in today's dollars.

1860 U. S. Federal Census

City: Academy; County: Pocahontas; State: VA

George McNeel Edmiston; Age: 49; Male; Farmer; Value of Real Estate: \$25,300; Value of Personal Estate: \$2,825; Place of Birth: VA

Nancy Edmiston; Age: 50; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Andrew Edmiston; Age: 82; Place of Birth: VA

Mary Edmiston; Age: 70; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Mary Edmiston; Age: 35; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Matthew Edmiston; Age: 20; Male; Farmer; Place of Birth: VA

Andrew Edmiston; Age: 19; Male; Farmer; Place of Birth: VA

Richard McNeel Edmiston; Age: 17; Male; Farmer; Place of Birth: VA

Abraham J. Edmiston; Age: 15; Male; Farmer; Place of Birth: VA

John J. Edmiston; Age: 12; Male; Place of Birth: VA

William R. Edmiston; Age: 6; Male; Place of Birth: VA

The following biographical information for Andrew was written about 1901.

Andrew Edmiston, Esq., of Scotch-Irish ancestry, late of the lower Levels, is the subject of this biographic memoir. The immediate ancestry of the Edmiston relationship is traceable to Matthew Edmiston, who came to Augusta County, Va., from Chester County, Pa., among

THE EDMISTON FAMILY

the earliest settlers of Augusta County, about 1740, or very soon thereafter.

James Edmiston, a son of Matthew the ancestor, was one of six children and was born in Augusta County, October 7, 1746, and died October 7, 1817. James Edmiston's wife was Jane Smith, from Ireland, who was born October 17th, 1746, and died May 20th, 1837, aged 91 years. Andrew Edmiston, son of James, was born July 22nd, 1777.

Soon after his marriage with Mary (Polly) Gilliland, January 8th, 1807, Mr. Edmiston settled near Locust, on lands now owned by George Callison. In reference to Mrs. Polly Edmiston, let it be noticed here that she was a daughter of the first Mrs. James Gilliland and Lydia Armstrong, born October 17th, 1755, and deceased July 23; 1817. Mrs. Polly Edmiston was born July 4th, 1790, and was a bride at 17 years of age. Her death occurred January 2, 1877, surviving her husband thirteen years. James Gilliland, her father, was born in Augusta County, March 16th, 1749, and died February, 14th, 1844, near Falling Spring, Greenbrier County, aged 95 years. He married for his second wife Mrs. Jane Smith Edmiston, the widowed mother of Andrew Edmiston, in February, 1819. By this marriage, Mr. Gilliland became Andrew Edmiston's step-father, as well as father-in-law, a relationship so unique as to challenge a parallel in the history of Pocahontas marriage relationships.

This James Gilliland's father was named Nathan Gilliland, about whom we have no particulars. By the first marriage there were six sons, Robert, James, Nathan, William, Samuel, and George; and six daughters, Jane, Sarah, Elizabeth, Nancy, Lydia, and Mary (Polly), the last named the wife of Andrew Edmiston.

What lends interest to what has just been said about James Gilliland's first family is the fact that there are cogent reasons for believing that Hon. Mark Hanna, of Ohio, is a descendant of one of the above named sisters.

It is also interesting to mention that Andrew Edmiston was a lineal descendant of Sir David Edmiston, cup-bearer to James 1st of Scotland; also of Sir James Edmiston, standard bearer of the royal colors in the battle of Sheriffmuir, (1715). In the Revolutionary war Mr. Edmiston's ancestors were distinguished, and notably at the battle of King's Mountain. Several of his grandsons were good Confederate soldiers in the late War Between the States. ...

In his youth and early manhood Andrew Edmiston seems to have had a consuming passion for athletic exercises, boxing, wrestling, and feats of muscular endurance. There was living at the time one Thomas Johnson, near the head of Stony Creek, who claimed to be the champion hard hitter of all that region. He heard of young Edmiston's exploits as an athlete, and these exploits created some doubt as to which was the "best man"; and to settle the question the ambitious Stony Creek champion sent a challenge to the champion of the lower • Levels, that if he would meet him he would find out that though he might be the best the Levels could show, that he would soon find himself nowhere on Stony Creek if he just dared to show himself up there. This fired young Edmiston, and made him as hot as the furnace we read of in Daniel. He may have sought rest but he did not find any that night, and so lie set out by the light of the morning stars for West Union.

He walked from his home near Locust to John Smith's, head of Stony Creek-fifteen or more miles-before breakfast to dispute the question of "best man" with Tom Johnson on his own Stony Creek ground. Without stopping for rest or breakfast he sailed into Johnson, tooth, fist, and toenail. In the first round Johnson landed a terrific blow on Edmiston's shoulder

that dislocated Edmiston's arm, and yet he continued the contest until he saw his opportunity, and overpowered Johnson until lie called out enough.

John Smith then took charge of the victor, the now best man of Stony Creek and the Levels, and gave him his breakfast, and' by noon lie was back at Locust. He felt the effects of that dislocation all of his subsequent life. Slight exertion would ever after make his injured arm fly out of place at the shoulder.

In his later years lie professed a change of heart and became a member of the M. E. Church. His sincerity was respected by all who knew him "best, and regarded genuine. Mr. Edmiston died April 15th, 1864, aged 87 years. When the dying day came, when he' was to pass over to the bright forever, it was found that lie had nothing to do but to die. God had nut cast him off in the time of old age, nor forsaken him when his strength failed. At evening time it was light with this venerable man, and lie could realize the power of words like these: "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only."

Taken from William T. Price, Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County, West Virginia, 1901, 168-175

Mary's father was James Gilliland and her mother was Lydia Armstrong. Both of these families were important in the area.

Lieutenant James Edmiston (1809-1871)
Mary Frye Hill (1815-1878)

We first find the relatively young family of James and Mary Edmiston living in Pocahontas County with their first three children. In addition, they have "And. J." (Andrew Jackson) Edmiston, James' younger brother, living in their home. James and Mary later named a son after him. M. A. Brock was probably a servant.

1850 U. S. Federal Census

City: 47th District; County: Pocahontas; State: VA

James Edmiston; Age: 40; Male; Farmer; Value of Real Estate: \$10,355; Place of Birth: VA

M.F. Edmiston; Age: 35; Female; Place of Birth: VA

M. Edmiston; Age: 9; Female; Place of Birth: VA

E. Edmiston; Age: 7; Female; Place of Birth: VA

M. A. Edmiston; Age: 5; Female; Place of Birth: VA

And. J. Edmiston; Age: 21; Male; Place of Birth: VA

M.A. Brock; Age: 23; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Ten years later, James and Mary have all of their children with them except their youngest, Commy, who is born later that very year. One might note that the substantial size of their real estate holdings is about half of that held by his brother, George McNeel Edmiston. Yet, the high value of the family's personal holdings seems to mostly make up the difference.

The Matthew S. who shows up here is our great grandfather.

1860 U. S. Federal Census

City: Academy; County: Pocahontas; State: VA

James Edmiston; Age: 51; Male; Farmer; Value of Real Estate: \$12,200; Value of Personal Estate: \$8,665; Place of Birth: VA

Mary Edmiston; Age: 44; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Martha Edmiston; Age: 18; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Evaline Edmiston; Age: 16; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Minerva Edmiston; Age: 14; Female; Place of Birth: VA

Nancy Edmiston; Age: 12; Female; Place of Birth: VA

James T. Edmiston; Age: 8; Male; Place of Birth: VA

Matthew S. Edmiston; Age: 6; Male; Place of Birth: VA

George W. Edmiston; Age: 6; Place of Birth: VA

Ada V. Edmiston; Age: 2; Female; Place of Birth: VA

The next view of this family is five years after the Civil War. They have moved to Towanda, KS. They have been devastated financially with about an 80% reduction in real estate value.

1870 U.S. Federal Census

City: Towanda; County: Butler; State: KS

James Edmiston; Age: 60; Male; Farmer; Value of Real Estate: \$2,660; Value of Personal Estate: \$1,800; Place of Birth: VA

Mary F. Edmiston; Age: 55; Female; Keeping House; Place of Birth: VA

Jackson Edmiston; Age: 22; Male; Farmer; Place of Birth: VA
Nancy J. Edmiston; Age: 19; Female; At Home; Place of Birth: VA
James T. Edmiston; Age: 17; Male; Farm Hand; Place of Birth: VA
Matthew S. Edmiston; Age: 14; Male; At Home; Place of Birth: VA
George W. Edmiston; Age: 14; Male; At Home; Place of Birth: VA
Addie V. Edmiston; Age: 12; Female; At Home; Place of Birth: VA



*This is what Towanda, Kansas, looks like today.
The tan stone building on the left houses the Towanda Historical Museum.*

The father, James, died a year later. Mary, his wife, died prematurely eight years later at the age of 63.



George McNeel Edmiston (1811-1884)

George McNeel Edmiston is Lieutenant James Edmiston's younger brother. This makes him our 2nd great grand uncle.

Here is a picture of George and four of his sons. It looks as if the photo was taken about 1880.



George McNeel Edmiston and Four Sons
Top from Left to Right: Andrew and Richard
Bottom from Left to Right: Abraham (Abram), George McNeel, Matthew

When the Levels Cavalry under Captain Andrew G. McNeel, 1861, were disbanded, many of its members joined the Bath Cavalry under Captain Archie Richards. April 25, 1862, this company was formed into two companies, "F" and "G," and was known as the Bath Squadron, attached to the 11th Virginia Cavalry. Dr A. G. McChesney was Captain of Company F. A. C. L. Gatewood, 1st Sergeant, and Edwin S. Beard, 2d Sergeant.

The following persons from Pocahontas were members of this company: Moffett Beard, W. W. Beard, John G. Beard, John J. Beard, James Burnside, James Callison, Clark Cochran, George B. Cochran, Andrew Edmiston, Richard Edmiston, Matthew Edmiston, John L. Kennison, Davis Kennison, D. B. McElwee, B. D. McElwee, John McCarty, A. G. McNeel, and G. H. Moffett.

Taken from William T. Price, Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County, West Virginia, 1901, 584-585



Abraham (Abram) Edmiston
Civil War Soldier

Mathew Shanklin Edmiston (1855-1898)
Eva Cordelia Bowlus (1862-1937)

Matthew Shanklin Edmiston is our great grandfather.

While he was born in Pocahontas County, WV, he grew up in Towanda, KS. Towanda was a sleepy little farm town in the southeastern part of the state, the kind of place a restless, young man might leave. So in his early twenties, sometime in the mid-1870s, Matthew Shanklin left home to join his cousins in western Kansas.

Some of Matthew Shanklin's cousins, the children of George McNeel Edmiston, had also come to that area as early as 1873. For example, the 1880 census shows John Edmiston as a farmer, then aged 32, who was married to Jennette H. Edmiston, then 34. They had two children: William R. Edmiston, age 9 and born in West Virginia; and Mary E. Edmiston, born in Kansas in 1873. There was another cousin, Andrew A. Edmiston, who had come to Kansas about 1875. In the census, Andrew is seen with his wife Julia A. age 29, and his five children: William T., 9; Abraham W., 8; Janie J., 6; Edgar A., 5; and Harvey J., 4.

A different Andrew, in this case Andrew Jackson Edmiston, is seen in the 1885 Kansas census living in Pierceville next to the family of Elias Bowlus. He is Mathew Shanklin's older brother.

1885 Kansas State Census

Town: Pierceville; County: Finney; State: KS

Elias E. Bowlus; Age: 48; Male; Stockman; Married; Place of Birth: MD

Mary A. Bowlus; Age: 44; Female; Married; Place of Birth: OH

Harry Bowlus; Age: 20; Male; Place of Birth: IN

Nora Bowlus; Age: 15; Female; Place of Birth: IN

Thomas Remock; Age: 22; Male; Farmer; Place of Birth: WV

Myron Filmore; Age: 22; Male; Laborer; Married; Place of Birth: MI

James Douglas; Age: 27; Male; Laborer; Married; Place of Birth: Canada

Andrew Edmiston; Age: 37; Male; Farmer; Married; Place of Birth: WV

Laura F. Edmiston; Age: 30; Female; Married; Place of Birth: MO

John Edmiston; Age: 8; Male; Place of Birth: KS

Mary Edmiston; Age: 6;

Female; Place of Birth: KS

Jessie M. Edmiston; Age: 5;

Female; Place of Birth: KS

Clifford Edmiston; Age: 3;

Male; Place of Birth: KS

George M. Edmiston; Age: 1;

Male; Place of Birth: KS

When in 1873, the Edmistons arrived in western Kansas, Dodge City was only two years old. It was a rough and tough place. Law was yet to be firmly established. Wyatt Eyrp was there. It had one general store, three dance halls, and six saloons. That

THE EDMISTON FAMILY



This is what Pierceville looks like today.

was probably just right for these boys, all of them Confederate veterans. Nearby was the town of Cimarron, that was to become a fabled stopping place on the Chisholm Trail, and in time to be named the county seat of Gray County. These two towns were to become an important destinations for the biggest cattle trail in the Midwest.

Once in this area, Mathew met a neighbor girl, Eva Bowlus. He married her two months before the birth of their first child, Lester Harry. Three years later, they had a second child, Mary Ada. It is not clear how long the marriage lasted after that point. They ultimately divorced.

After their divorce, Mathew left the area. He died in 1898, at the age of 43 in White Pine, Colorado. Eva went back home to live with her parents. In the 1895 Kansas census, we see Ada's children living in the Bowlus home. (The H. L. Edmiston seems to be Lester Harry Edmiston and the M. A. Edmiston seems to be Mary Ada Edmiston, both children of Mathew Shaklin Edmiston and Eva Bowlus.)

1895 Kansas State Census

Town: Logan; **County:** Gray; **State:** KS

E.E. Bowlus; Age: 58; Male; Married' Place of Birth: MD; Farmer
M. A. Bowlus; Age: 53; Female; Place of Birth: OH; Farmer's Wife
H. L. Edmiston; Age: 12; Male; Place of Birth: KS; Laborer
M. A. Edmiston; Age: 9; Female; Place of Birth: KS; Laborer
Lucy Carr; Age: 22; Female; Place of Birth: MI; School Teacher
Muriel Carr; Age: 26; Female; Place of Birth: MI
Oly Ness; Age: 28; Female; Place of Birth: Norway; Laborer

In 1900, Eva is seen with her children at the home of her parents.

1900 U.S. Federal Census

Town: Logan Twp.; **County:** Gray; **State:** KS

Elias E. Bowlus; Head; Male; Date of Birth: January 1837; Age: 67; Married; Years Married: 41; Place of Birth: MD; Place of Father's Birth: MD; Place of Mother's Birth: MD; Stockraiser

Mary A. Bowlus; Wife; Female; Date of Birth: May 1841; Age: 59; Married; Years Married: 41; Place of Birth: OH; Place of Father's Birth: OH; Place of Mother's Birth: OH

Eva J. Edmiston; Daughter; Female; Date of Birth: March 1862; Age: 38; Divorced; Place of Birth: IN; Place of Father's Birth: MD; Place of Mother's Birth: OH

Lester Edmiston; Grandson; Male; Date of Birth: November 1882; Age: 17; Single; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: IN; Place of Mother's Birth: IN

Ida Edmiston; Granddaughter; Female; Date of Birth: July 1885; Age: 15; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: IN; Place of Mother's Birth: IN

Owen Barger; Servant; Male; Date of Birth: October 1882; Age: 17; Single; Place of Birth: KY; Place of Father's Birth: KY; Place of Mother's Birth: KY

John Clark; Servant; Male; Date of Birth: January 1863; Age: 37; Place of Birth: OH; Place of Father's Birth: OH; Place of Mother's Birth: OH

Ned Culp; Servant; Male; Date of Birth: March 1877; Age: 23; Single; Place of Birth: IL; Place of Father's Birth: IL; Place of Mother's Birth: IL

The obituaries for Elias and Mary Bowlus appeared in the local papers.
THE EDMISTON FAMILY

9 June 1900

BOWLUS, Mrs. Mary, age 59, wife of E.E. Bowlus, at the home 4 miles east of Pierceville, on Tuesday, June 5 after a lengthy illness. Born in 1841, she had been a resident of Kansas since 1879. Elder McKeever conducted her service at the Christian Church here. Interment in Garden City Cemetery.

Bowlus, Mary A. May 12, 1841 B June 5, 1900 Mother

10 December 1904

BOWLUS, Elias Edward, died December 3, 1904, at his home near Pierceville from typhoid-pneumonia. Born January 22, 1837 in Frederick County, Md., at the age of seven he moved with his parents, Daniel and Mary Bowlus, to Warren County, Ind., on a farm three miles south of Williamsport. He married Mary Ann Jones October 4, 1859. He farmed in Warren County until February 20, 1879 when he came to Kansas, settling on Buckner Creek, Hodgeman County, where he proved up a pre-emption claim. In the spring of 1880 he located 3 2 miles east of Pierceville where he lived until his death. Mrs. Bowlus died June 4, 1900. They were the parents of five children, three of whom survive: **Mrs. Ella C. Edmiston of Walla Walla, Wash.**, Mrs. Nora M. Rochester of El Paso, Tex., and H.E. Bowlus of Pierceville. The funeral was from the Christian Church Monday. [Interment was in Garden City Cemetery.

NOTE: The above mentioned "Ella C. Edmiston" surely must be Eva J. (Bowlus) Edmiston, who married Mathew Edmiston.

10 December 1904 (*The Garden City Imprint*, January 1901-December 1911)

BOWLUS, E. E., an old resident of this county, died at his home in Gray County Friday. The remains were brought here and interred in the City Cemetery Monday beside those of his wife.

Bowlus, Elias E. Jan. 22, 1837; Dec. 3, 1904 Father.

John Jordan Edmiston (1848-1917)

John Jordan was the 1st cousin of Mathew Shanklin Edmiston, our great grandfather. John's father, George McNeel Edmiston, and Mathew's father, James Edmiston, were brothers. Their lives followed similar paths: both were born in Pocahontas County, WV and both moved to Kansas as a youth.

An Interview of John Jordan Edmiston by a Towanda, Kansas Newspaper on 6 March 1908, Possibly The Western Butler County Times

John J. Edmiston was born in 1848, in Pocahontas county, in what is now West Virginia. His ancestors came to West Virginia in the early colonial days and ranked among the first families of the colonies in that area. They participated in the American revolution of the state of Virginia. He is of Scotch Irish decent, his ancestors came to America from England sometime in the sixteen hundreds, settling in what was afterwards the Province of Pennsylvania. From there his great, great grandfather came to Virginia in 1740, locating in Augusta county.

Quoting from "Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County" by Wm. T. Price, I find that the Edmistons referred to above were lineal descendants of Sir David Edmiston, cup bearer to James 1st of Scotland, also of Sir James Edmiston, standard bearer of the royal colors in the battle Sheriffmuir (1715). In the Revolutionary War John Jordan Edmiston's ancestors were distinguished and notably at the battle of Kings Mountain. Although John's father was bitterly opposed to the secession of Virginia and remained loyal to the Union, four of his older brothers were members of the 10th Virginia cavalry and fought valiantly during the war for the south. They were noted alike for their humanity and bravery.

Referring again to history, I found one of his relatives, Mathew Edmiston's name appears in the history of our state as one of its most distinguished native born public characters. Mention is made of him as follows: "Judge Edmiston was born in 1814 at Little Levels Pocahontas County, was admitted to the bar in 1835, he was afterwards a member in both branches of the General Assembly of Virginia. In 1852 he was chosen judge of the Circuit Court, serving until 1860. He was elected to a seat in the Constitutional Convention of 1872 and was appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of Appeals in 1886. He died in June 1887."

Andrew Edmiston the, grandfather of John Jordan Edmiston, was a strong abolitionist and refused to accept and hold in slavery the negros he inherited from his father, granting them their freedom instead. In Andrew's younger days athletic exercises were made the test of manhood and Andrew appears to have had strong passions for boxing, wrestling and feats of muscular endurance. It is said of young Andrew Edmiston, that on being challenged by another aspiring athletic for honors (who resided in another township), walked fifteen miles one morning before breakfast to meet his opponent, fought him at sight, and though his shoulder was dislocated on the first round, he continued the contest and defeated the would be champion.

On John Jordan Edmiston's mother's side, he is related to the McNeels, a family prominent in Virginia's early history. They were enlightened and patriotic, John McNeel, John Jordan Edmiston's grandfather (on his mother's side) was able bodied, serving under Washington during the revolution.

An event occurred in John Jordan Edmiston's family which was quite unusual. His grandfather's mother, married his grandmother's father, one of them being 72 and the other 71 years old at the time. They lived together seventeen years. The union proved to be a happy one for both.

John's father, James Edmiston, was not disturbed greatly by either side during the rebellion. His known union sentiment protecting him from the Union and his having sons in the Confederate army protected him from that side. On one occasion the federals came through and robbed his home. Like their neighbors however, they were compelled to drive their horses and cattle into the mountains, keeping them hid from the soldiers of both armies. In many instances this did no good, as the negroes would tell the Union soldiers where they were concealed.

Before the war the Edmistons residing in that part of Virginia were well-to-do, being large land holders and owning many slaves, but in common with the rest of the southern people, the war swept their fortunes away. In consequence, many of the Edmistons came west to seek new homes, among them was the subject of this story, John Jordan Edmiston. Sometime previous to leaving Virginia he was married to Miss Jennetta Moore, who with him, came to Butler County in March 1871. They settled on and homesteaded a farm lying two and a half miles northwest of Towanda which, with the exception of four years spent in El Dorado Springs Missouri, where they went for Mr Edmiston's health, has been their home since coming to Kansas. John says, "This at that time was the most democratic and equally balanced socially area in the United States; the citizens were all poor alike, consequently none were envious and there was no jealousy. How could there be? We all lived in the same door yard, and the impartial distribution of malarial diseases caused that sympathetic feeling which makes all the world akin."

Mr. and Mrs. Edmiston began house keeping in a little frame shack thirteen feet square, why they selected that unlucky number for the dimension of their house is not known, however in their case, the "hoodoo" did not work, but they worked, and prospered. True, for some years corn bread was the staff of life, and sorgum a luxury, but after a time they could afford wheat bread for at least two meals a day, and then the rest was easy. Although they do tell of a time when one pound of coffee lasted them a year, after dividing with a neighbor, and of a dollars worth of brown sugar, or about 8 lbs., lasting six months. Of course these articles of luxury were not kept for use, but simply so they could say they were never out of groceries. Seriously, Mr. Edmiston, and family, endured the privations of pioneer life with the other settlers. The history of one family is about the history of all, of course they had a hard "row to hoe", but they hoed it and are enjoying the results of their labor.

This winter (1908) they purchased a desirable residence in Towanda, to which they recently moved and are now prepared to take life easy. Mr. and Mrs. Edmiston are progressive people keeping fully up with the times. Southern people are noted for their hospitality and genial natures. Our friends are no exception to this rule. At no home in the country does one meet with a warmer welcome, and at no home is a visit more enjoyable. There are times in the lives of all of us when helpful and sympathizing friends come very near to us, and these our friends in particular are markedly noted. Of these friends it is always said they are good citizens and good neighbors, and the compliment is deserved.

Jannetta Huston Moore Edmiston (1845-1948)

Janetta was the wife of John Jordan Edmiston. They were married when John was about 20 and Janetta was about 17. They had three children. She passed away in her home on Tuesday, 29 June 1948. At the time of her death, she was 102 years old. In addition to having been the oldest resident of Butler County, Mrs. Edmiston was the last of the original homesteaders who settled in that section of Kansas after the Civil War. At the time of her death, she still maintained the title to the homestead.

An Interview of Mrs. Jennetta Moore Edmiston by a Towanda, Kansas Newspaper about 13 March 1908, Possibly The Western Butler County Times

"Miss Jennetta Moore was born in Mingo Flats, Randolph county West Virginia September 5th 1845. She is descended from English and Irish parentage, her great grandmother Miss Amanda Wood (census states that was her mother) was born and raised in London, England. Her great grandfather, Thomas Moore was a native of Dublin, Ireland. He was directly related to Thomas Moore, the Irish poet. The year in which her ancestors came to America is not known or at what point they settled, or when they located in West Virginia, though many years before the war.

Unfortunately for them, they lived in that part of the state that was the scene of much of the military operations of both armies during the rebellion and they shared with other citizens all the dangers and hardships, incident to such conditions. The soldiers of both armies were pitiless, seemingly caring nothing for the suffering and privations which they knew must follow their indiscriminate plundering, especially when it was the women and children who were thus left destitute. All of the able bodied men were in the service. Consequently the work of maintaining the families was left to the women mostly. They had to plow, plant and cultivate the crops, harvest them when ready, go to the mill. In fact, do all the work incidental to the farm. It was often the case after the winter supplies were gathered and housed, parties of soldiers would pass through the country taking everything eatable, drive off the stock, and kill the poultry and hogs. As they passed, they robbed the houses, taking clothing and bedding.

The younger generations who have never witnessed such scenes can have no conception of the utter desolation in that part of the country through which a hostile army has marched. Once through was bad enough, but when it came to marching and counter marching, no famine or plague of insects, however bad, can equal it, for the first may depopulate and the last devastate, but they do not destroy building and fences, but an army does. The fences are used for fuel and the houses are often burned from mere wantonness.

Mrs. Edmiston's people were southern sympathizers. They were slave holders and among the first families of the state in wealth and social position. Her home was the resort of many leading men in the Confederacy. General Robert E. Lee had his head quarters in her father's house during the summer of 1861 while the Union army, under McClellan, was lying at Elkwater twelve miles away. Encounters between the two forces were of everyday occurrences and the sick and wounded were many. The wounded were brought to their home while she and the other women of the family cared for them. The color of the uniform made no difference, all were treated the same. For this and for supplies taken, they never received any pay. Frequently, companies of soldiers would come and order the ladies to prepare meals for them, which they felt compelled to do, though it would take all the provisions in the house. She tells of one time when the Union General Averill stopped

overnight with 3,000 men on their plantation and took every eatable thing they could find. Luckily for the family, some cornmeal and a few pieces of meat had been put in a bedroom for hiding, and the soldiers for some reason failed to open the room door so did not find the provisions which supplied the family until they could get more provisions. Averill did have the grace to say that her father ought to be paid for what his men had taken, but the proposition never went any farther, as they were given nothing from the government.

At the close of the war, her people were left practically destitute as were all the southern people, especially those residing in the track of the armies. Their land was left, but buildings and fences were burned, slaves freed, others had run away, horses and cattle driven off, and most of all, no money obtainable with which to repair and replace the devastation. There was no escape from the hardships following the war. Mrs. Edmiston passed through it all and has many interesting stories to tell.

Her pioneer life in Butler County was not all sunshine, but her nature is such that she took the bitter with the sweet, making the best of all her early training in helping to care for the sick and wounded soldiers. All her trials as a young woman helped prepare her for the difficulties of a pioneer life on the prairie. Her sweet nature, and early tough days, helped her to do the work she is noted for in this community. None are more charitable and none more helpful in time of need than she. In short, she is not only a Christian by profession, but in daily life, a fact that tells it all. She with Mr. Edmiston, having by hard and honest work, earned a rest, with their earned financial stability, have now moved to Towanda for the purpose of retiring. May they live long and happily in their new home is the wish of all their old and many new friends.

In 1825 the family was still in Topock. One more child, Eugene, had been born.

1825: 11. 5. Portland, Canada.

Town: Topock, County: Sherman, State: KS.

Address: 1105 Van Curen Street.

Leola H. Edmiston, Head, Age: 37, Place of Birth: KS, Place of Father's Birth: VA, Place of Mother's Birth: PA, Occupation: Clerk, Occupation: Asst. Tax Dept. R.R. Office, Leola H. Edmiston, Wife, Age: 25, Place of Birth: KS, Place of Father's Birth: OH, Place of Mother's Birth: KY.

Richard C. Edmiston, Son, Age: 12, Place of Birth: IL, Place of Father's Birth: KS, Place of Mother's Birth: KS.

Albert H. Edmiston, Son, Age: 10, Place of Birth: KS, Place of Father's Birth: KS, Place of Mother's Birth: KS.

Eugene E. Edmiston, Son, Age: 7, Place of Birth: KS, Place of Father's Birth: KS, Place of Mother's Birth: KS.

Residing in the Woods, the family moved to Long Beach, CA.

In 1825 the family was still in Topock. One more child, Eugene, had been born.

Lester Harry Edmiston (1882-1927)
Leona Diantha Dawson (1884-1953)

In 1895, Lester is 12 years old and living with his sister in the home of Elias Bowlus, his grandfather, in Logan Township, Gray County, KS.

In 1900, Lester is 17 years old and is still living with his sister and mother in the home of Elias Bowlus, his grandfather, in Logan Township, Gray County, KS.

Four years later, Lester's grandfather died when he was 21. He left home and moved to Topeka.

In 1910, Lester was working in Topeka as a railroad clerk. In 1904, he married Leona. In this census, they had two children.

1910 U. S. Federal Census

Town: Topeka; County: Shawnee; State: KS

Lester H. Edmiston; Head; Male; Age: 28; Years Married: 6; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: IN; Occupation: Clerk, RR Test Dept.

Leona D. Edmiston; Wife; Age: 26; Years Married: 6; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: OH; Place of Mother's Birth: KY

Richard Edmiston; Son; Age: 5; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: KS

Albert M. Edmiston; Age: 4 Months; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: KS

In 1920, the family was still in Topeka. One more child, Eugene, had been born.

1920 U. S. Federal Census

Town: Topeka; County: Shawnee; State: KS

Address: 1101 Van Buren Street

Lester H. Edmiston; Head; Age: 37; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: VA; Place of Mother's Birth: IN; Occupation: Clerk; Occupation: Asst. Test Dept, R.R. Office

Leona D. Edmiston; Wife; Age: 36; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: OH; Place of Mother's Birth: KY

Richard D. Edmiston; Son; Age: 13; Place of Birth: IL; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: KS

Albert M. Edmiston; Son; Age: 10; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: KS

Eugene E. Edmiston; Son; Age: 7; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: KS

Sometime in the 19020s, this family moved to Long Beach, CA.

In 1927, Lester died there in an industrial accident.

The Signal Hill Leader, Friday, 19 August 1927
Three Dead in Hill Oil Blast

Three men are dead and one is not expected to live as the result of burns which they received when a gas compressor exploded at the huge Shell plant on East Willow, Signal Hill, Monday night.

William Faulis, 56, of 2034 East Nineteenth Street, Signal Hill, died three hours after the explosion at the Community Hospital.

Lester Edmiston, 44, of Los Angeles, and Joe Reid, 32, of 6720 Delta Avenue, Long Beach, died the following day at Seaside Hospital as a result of their burns.

Van Clede Ousbourn, 29, of Bellflower is in Seaside Hospital, and little hope is held for his recovery.

A blast from an undetermined cause at No. 1 compressor in the big building filled the structure with flame at 8:10 o'clock Monday night. The four men working in the vicinity were covered with flames.

Firemen were forced to enter and leave the plant by climbing under a large wire fence. The Signal Hill department and Shell crew stopped the blaze and kept it from spreading to other nearby properties.



A Signal Hill Fire

Unexpectedly, Leona became the head of the home. Her sister, Irene, came to live with her bringing William, her son from her first marriage, with her.

1930 U. S. Federal Census

Town: Long Beach; County: Los Angeles; State: CA

Address: 14232 East Ocean

Leona D. Edmiston; Head; Age: 45; Widowed; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: OH; Place of Mother's Birth: KY

Albert Edmiston; Son; Age: 19; Single; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: KS

Eugene E. Edmiston; Son; Age: 18; Single; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: KS

Sibley M. Edmiston; Son; Age: 9; Single; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: KS

Irene D. Tucker; Sister; Age: 41; Widowed; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: OH; Place of Mother's Birth: KY

William W. Sherburn; Nephew; Age: 18; Single; Place of Birth: KS; Place of Father's Birth: KS; Place of Mother's Birth: KS

THE EDMISTON FAMILY

Sir William Edmonstoun (About 1025-1080 AD)

William Edmonstoun is our 21st great grandfather. He was a younger son of Count de Edmont, Duke of Flanders. (A duke is a sovereign prince who ruled an independent duchy, or county, in Europe. In the Middle Ages, Flanders was an area of European low country covering parts of what is now France, Belgium and the Netherlands.) The father of Count de Edmont is thought to have been a younger son of King Baldwin IV who in turn was a descendant of Elfrida, a daughter of Alfred the Great, Saxon King of England. Because of his birth - a younger son of a younger son - William found himself in a quite unfortunate position, particularly in the times of primogeniture, where the oldest son inherits most of the estate from both parents.

Because William's older brother expected rightfully to receive the majority of his father's land, castle and other holdings, William left home to seek a fortune on his own despite the power and wealth his father had accumulated. William took the most promising position he could find, a knight, a military man of his time. He knew that effective fighters would always be in high demand by the kings and dukes of Europe.

Back in England, King Edmund II, (989-1016), whose nickname was "Ironside," reflecting his military prowess, had a son by his wife Ælfdgyth. That son's name was Edward, (1016-1057). Shortly, his wife became pregnant with a second son, who would be named Edmund. He was due to be born in 1017. But the family's fortunes changed suddenly. On 30 November 1016, King Edmund, the father, died of natural causes. Canute, a Dane, who had invaded England a year or so earlier assumed power. Soon after Edmund II's second son was born, Canute took the two baby boys and sent them to Denmark. His intent was to have them killed there. But his plans were thwarted. Their lives were protected and they were moved secretly first to Kiev and then to Hungary.



King Edmund II

These boys were in exile for 46 years. For this reason, Edward is called in history books, "Edward the Exile." Canute ruled for 19 years, dying in 1035. After that, there was little desire to return to England. Edward, when a young adult, began putting his life together. He married Agatha Arpad, a daughter of Stephen, the king of Hungary. In time, he also became acquainted with two young men he came to admire and trust - Sir William Edmonstoun, and Maurice Drummond. (The Edmonstoun's and the Drummonds were to stay closely connected for centuries.)

In 1042, after years of struggle following the death of Canute, Edward the Confessor became king of England. He was King Edmund II's step-brother. After many years, he heard that Edward the Exile, his nephew, was still alive and living comfortably in Europe. He rejoiced at the news. Here was a chance for him to strengthen the royal line. He invited Edward to return to England and become his heir. When Edward returned in 1063, he brought his two knights, William Edmonstoun and Maurice Drummond. They were serving as body guards for his youngest daughter, Margaret.

Sadly, the grand plans of Edward the Confessor fell apart. Soon after he returned to England, Edward the Exile died. This left Edward the Confessor's only one heir, his weak son, Edgar. The prospect of having Edgar as a ruler pleased no one. Luckily, the problem of Edgar was postponed. Edward the Confessor ruled as king of England for 22 years.

During his rule, Edward the Confessor, offered his army, in 1053, to help a Scottish man named Malcolm. He became Malcolm III, (1031-1093), upon gaining the throne of Scotland from Macbeth, a close relative who had killed Malcolm's father. Malcolm found support from the nobles of southern Scotland. In the battles in Scotland, Malcolm killed Macbeth and took command of the entire country. (Malcolm's nickname was "Canmore," or "Kenmure," meaning *Big Head* in the Gaelic language.)

Upon the death of Edward the Confessor in 1066, the English people rejected his son, Edgar. Filling the vacuum of power, a powerful English nobleman, Harold, seized the throne. Then William the Conqueror, ruler of Normandy, (1028-1087), challenged Harold, asserting that he, though abroad, possessed more right to the English throne than did Harold. He was the second cousin of King Edmund II and of Edward the Confessor. (Normandy was a region in northern France.)

To reinforce his claim, William the Conqueror invaded England without opposition. This was in 1066.

Harold was killed in England by William's army at the Battle of Hastings. In short order, the English generals surrendered and crowned William king. So William the Conqueror ruled in England and thus allocated lands in England to his supporters. Anglo-Norman



At the beginning of these hostilities, the family of Edward the Exile, including Margaret, fled from England in a ship headed Europe and for the protection that it could provide. But they were soon blown northward and off course, landing in Scotland. The Scottish king, Malcolm, III, Malcom Kenmure, invited them to stay. Since William Edmundstoun and Maurice Drummond were traveling with the royal family. This is the way they ended up in Scotland.

In time, the Queen of Scotland died, and her husband, Malcolm III, Malcolm Kenmure, King of Scotland, married Margaret. Through this marriage, William Edmundstoun and Maurice Drummond, her servants and protectors, became knights to the King and Queen of Scotland. Now Queen, Margaret introduced many English fashions and customs to Scotland and established a refined court life. She also imposed the Roman Catholic Church on the Scottish clergy. In the process, the cultural center of Scotland moved away from the Celtic north to Lothian, in the south of Scotland. Malcolm and Margaret had eight children. Four of Malcolm's sons later became kings of Scotland. As Malcom Kenmure ruled Scotland, he gradually allocated land in Scotland to his supporters.



By custom, each King protected his knights, giving them land sufficient for their support, usually at least 1,500 acres. In return, a knight provided each year at least 40 days of military service. Knights were completely loyal to their King. They would not marry without the King's consent. In appreciation for his service to the family, King Malcolm Kenmure gave William Edmundstoun a substantial grant of land in Scotland.

In this way, the Edmiston became Scots.

More than Two Hundred Years of Scottish History

Pay attention. Despite the fact that these people lived very long ago, they are a part of our story. By the end of this story, you will that some of your ancestors have emerged.

Reign-1058 to 1093

Malcolm III, Malcolm Kenmure, "The Big Head" (1031-1093)

Throughout his reign, Malcolm waged wars with the English Norman kings. In 1072, he lost and was forced to give an oath of obedience to William I, King of England. A later conflict with William I in 1093 led to the loss of more Scottish territory. Malcolm died that same year in an ambush. Despite his unfortunate death, Malcolm's descendants continued to rule Scotland for about 150 years, until 1249.



Malcolm III
Malcolm Kenmure

Reign-1093 to 1097

Donald III with Edmund I (1033-1099)

Upon the death of his brother, Malcolm, Donald took the throne, sharing responsibilities with his nephew, Edmund I. In 1097, they were deposed by a man named Edgar with the help of English troops.

Reign-1097 to 1107

Edgar, "The Peaceable" (1074-1107)

Edgar ruled ten years and died childless at the age of 33.

Reign-1107 to 1124

Alexander I, "The Fierce" (1078-1124)

Upon Edgar's death, his brother, Alexander, at the age of 29, took the throne. He championed the independence of the Scottish clergy, and struggled about this with authorities of the English Church. A historian has said of Alexander: "He was humble and courteous to the clergy, but, to the rest of his subjects, terrible beyond measure."

Reign-1124 to 1153

King David I, "The Saint" (1084-1153)

Upon the death of Edgar in 1107, Scottish territories were divided between two brothers, Alexander and David. In time, one of the brothers, Alexander, died, and Scotland was back together. David was the last son of Malcolm and Margaret to rule Scotland. In 1135, David invaded England. England resisted with a great army and David withdrew. He attacked England again in 1138, but was turned back. Thereafter, he turned peaceful. He built the royal towns of Stirling, Perth, Dunfermline and Edinburgh. In 1141, he visited London. After a narrow escape from capture, he returned to Scotland. From that time forward, he remained in Scotland and focused reorganizing its government and church. He created a central administration. He built cities and castles, reformulated the legal code, introduced a national currency, reformed the church, and built monasteries. Of David, one historian wrote: "David was the king who effectively created the kingdom of Scotland as we would now recognize it."



Melrose Abbey
Built during the reign of
David I

Reign-1153 to 1165

Malcolm IV, "The Maiden" (1141-1165)

Malcolm was David's grandson. He was pious, frail and chaste. He relinquished land to England. He died unmarried and childless.

THE EDMISTON FAMILY

Reign-1165 to 1214

William I, "The Lion" (1142-1214)

William was Malcolm IV's brother and the great grandson of Malcolm Kenmore. In sharp contrast to Malcolm IV's weakness, William was powerfully-built, redheaded and headstrong. But his nickname, "The Lion," came not from his lion-like appearance or his tenacious character or his military prowess. It was simply because he used a lion with a forked tail on his flag. William conducted a revolt against England in 1174. In that battle, he recklessly led the charge himself and was unhorsed, captured, placed in chains and transferred to Normandy. Then King Henry of England sent an army to occupy Scotland. As the price of regaining his kingdom, William acknowledged Henry as his superior and agreed to pay for the cost of the occupying English troops. Then he was allowed to return. After Henry's death, the new English king, Richard the Lionheart, suggested the end of English occupation of Scotland with the payment of a large sum of money, funds needed to finance the Third Crusade. William's reign of 49 years was the second longest in Scottish history.



The Banner of King William

Reign-1214 to 1249

Alexander II (1198-1249)

Alexander was the son of William I and Ermengarde. At the death of his father, he became king when he was only 16 years old. The next year, Scottish clans rose in rebellion and were defeated. He also joined with English barons who forced John to sign the Magna Carta in 1215 by leading his army against King John I of England. Shortly thereafter, John died and peace broke out between Scotland, England and France. At the age of 23, Alexander sealed that peace by marrying Joan, the daughter of King John and sister of the new king, the young King Henry III. She was 11 years old at the time. Despite occasional disputes, claims and counter-claims, the relationship between Scotland and England remained relatively calm. After 18 years of marriage, Joan died, Alexander then married Marie de Coucy. That marriage produced Alexander III, the next king of Scotland. Alexander II died of a fever at the age of 51.

Reign-1249 to 1289

Alexander III, "The Glorious" (1241-1289)

Alexander ranks as one of Scotland's greatest kings. He became king at the age of eight. While he was a child, rival powers struggled around him. When he was 10 years old, he married Margaret (1), another daughter of Henry III of England. Henry III seized the opportunity to demand Scottish homage to England, but Alexander did not comply. (The population of Scotland was about 400,000 at this time.) When Alexander was 21 years old, he resumed a project his father had begun 13 years earlier – the capture of the Western Isles of Scotland, then held by Norway. Four years later, Norway ceded that land to Scotland in return for a cash payment. Norway retained in the area only Orkney and Shetland. After 23 years of marriage, Margaret (1) died. One of her daughters, Margaret (2) married King Erik II of Norway. Her daughter, Margaret (3), was to later become Queen of Scotland. As a widower, Alexander was rarely alone. As a contemporary record, the Lanercost Chronicle, describes: "he used never to forbear on account of season nor storm, nor for perils of flood or rocky cliffs, but would visit none too creditably nuns or matrons, virgins or widows as the fancy seized him, sometimes in disguise." Near the end of his reign, Alexander's three children all died. To guarantee a proper succession, he specified his granddaughter, Margaret, (3) to be heir-presumptive. Several years later, when he was 44 years of age, Alexander traveled at night to visit a lady friend. On



King Alexander III

the way, he became separated from his guides and rode unexpectedly to the edge a cliff. Startled, his horse lost its footing and fell over taking his rider with him. The king was found the next morning lying dead on the shore below. His death ushered in a time of political upheaval.

Reign-1289-1290

Margaret (3) , "Maid of Norway" (1283-1290)

When Alexander died, his granddaughter, Margaret, was only three years old. Her mother had died in childbirth. Immediately, a struggle for the throne began. King Alexander's second wife, Yolanda, claimed that she was pregnant with a legitimate heir. With this news, she countered the claims of two powerful nobles: Robert Bruce, grandfather of Robert the Bruce, the future King Robert I of Scotland, and John Balliol. When it was discovered that Yolanda was not really pregnant, it was decided that Margaret, Alexander's only surviving descendant would ascend to the throne under a regency of six nobles. When Margaret was seven years old, she was betrothed to the son of King Edward I of England. But Margaret died shortly thereafter leaving no descendants.

Reign-1290-1292

Vacant

With Margaret's sudden death, Scotland was left with no clear successor to the throne. The next two years was a period of shaky transition.

Reign-1292-1297

John Balliol, "Empty Coat" (1248-1315)

John Balliol was one of thirteen contenders for the Scottish throne. He, the 3rd great grandson of David I, submitted his claim to the Scottish auditors in an election overseen by King Edward I of England. Finally, the board of auditors ruled in John's favor and he was crowned King of Scotland, the last Scottish king to sit on the Stone of Destiny. (The Stone of Destiny was taken to England where it remained until the 19th century when it was returned. It is now on display at the Edinburgh Castle.) But John was placed in a difficult position.

Edward I of England tried to humiliate the new king by asserting England's natural feudal superiority. To strengthen Scotland's position, King John Balliol signed a treaty with France. Edward I, then an invalid attacked beginning the Wars of Scottish Independence. But in the initial battles, Scotland was defeated and John abdicated his throne. The arms of Scotland were formally torn from King John's coat, giving him the abiding name of "Toom Tabard," empty coat. John was imprisoned in the Tower of London, but later was released to a life of exile in France. He died there.



John Balliol

1292-1306

Vacant

For fourteen years, Scotland was left without a monarch. During this time, William Wallace and others carried out a general rebellion against the English.

Reign-1306-1329

Robert I, "Robert the Bruce" (1274-1329)

Robert claimed royal ancestry through his mother. King David I was his 4th great grandfather. He became one of Scotland's greatest kings, as well as one of the most famous warriors of his generation. By his courage and skill, he freed Scotland from English rule. Robert the Bruce is our 18th great grandfather. Thus we are right in the middle of in this royal line. His story is told in the following section.



Robert the Bruce

THE EDMISTON FAMILY